



# Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, February 16th, 2018

Volume 25, Number 7

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- Tooie Design Non-Motorized Mobility Study for Downtown Mobile
- 2018 Unified Planning Work Program
- 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program
- Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones

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The White House has released its Infrastructure package [HERE](#). There is a lot of emphasis on incentives, rural transportation, tolling and innovative financing in the package, all while President Trump supports a **25-CENT GAS TAX?** please see *Legislative Updates*. Mardi Gras is over and "The car has been drinking" is not an excuse, or is it? See *Just For Fun*. The Mobile MPO met this week; see *Mobile MPO Updates* and lower speeds in Gulf Shores and floating docks in Mobile, *In The News*. Please take a moment to take a survey as part of an ALDOT research project – See *Transportation Research*.

Have a great weekend!

Check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison, PTP

[www.mobilempo.org](http://www.mobilempo.org)  check us out on FACEBOOK

## Mobile MPO Updates

### MOBILE MPO met this week

Safety Performance Measures

The Mobile MPO, and the Eastern Shore MPO, will have to adopt Safety Performance Measures by February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The Alabama Department of Transportation has already developed performance measures for the State of Alabama, and the MPO has the option of supporting the state's Safety Performance Measures or adopting their own. The performance measures are baselines and targets for:

- Number of Fatalities
- Fatality rate (VMT)
- Number of Serious Injuries
- Serious Injury rate (VMT)
- Number of Bicycle/Pedestrian injuries

All of the federally funded transportation projects must work towards the goals set by the MPO, and the State of Alabama. At the TCC/CAC meeting, these were discussed and recommended for adoption at Wednesday's meeting. Also, project 100060153 ( CN ) SR-158 Extension from 0.5 Mile East of Glenwood Road to West of Lott Road (SR-217). Grade Drain, Base, Pave has a new cost estimate from \$17,721,177 to \$30,005,229 that required a MPO resolution. This cost estimate increase is a result of creative shifting of federal funds within ALDOT.

### Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project Announces Shortlist

MOBILE, AL. – On Tuesday, the Alabama Department of Transportation announced the shortlist of three project teams to respond to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Alabama Department of Transportation's (ALDOT) Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project, which will provide relief to one of the region's most congested areas.

In November 2017, four teams responded to a request to provide ALDOT with Submittals of Qualifications (SOQ). Upon review of the SOQs, the shortlisted teams moving forward in the RFP process are:

#### I-10 Mobility Partners

- Equity Members: Cintra and Meridiam
- Lead Engineering Firm: Parsons
- Lead Contractor: Ferrovial Argoman and Parsons
- Lead Operations and Maintenance: Cintra and Meridiam

#### Gulf Coast Connectors

- Equity Members: ACS, Macquarie, Hochtief, and John Laing
- Lead Engineering Firm: T.Y. LIN International
- Lead Contractor: Dragados, Lane Construction, and Flatiron
- Lead Operations and Maintenance: Gulf Coast Connectors

#### Mobile River Bridge Group

- Equity Members: InfraRed Capital Partners, Shikun & Binui, Astaldi, and
- Southland Holdings

- Lead Engineering Firm: Figg Bridge Engineers
- Lead Contractor: A Joint Venture of Astaldi, Johnson Bros, and Shikun & Binui
- Lead Operations and Maintenance: InfraRed Capital Partners (InfraRed Infrastructure V), Astaldi, and Southland Holdings

The project will be completed with the use of a Public-Private Partnership (P3), which is a way to use public and private funds to accelerate the delivery of the project. P3 financing allows ALDOT to utilize private sector technical, management and additional financial resources to help achieve the project's objectives.

The selected team will not only build the bridge but also take over the maintenance of the project. Therefore, the team will be expected to enter into a 55-year contract. The funding of this project will include revenues generated from all electronic tolling, a public subsidy and equity from the concessionaire.

The three teams – deemed qualified after a thorough technical and financial capability review that included past project experience – will submit proposals for the design, build, finance, operations and maintenance of the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway. Proposals will be due this fall, with the selected team expected to be chosen by the end of the year.

The project will be built under the Alabama Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority.

**About the Toll Road, Bridge and Tunnel Authority:**

The powers of the Authority include the ability to give consent and approval for ALDOT to build toll road, bridge or tunnel projects in places that are deemed desirable, practicable, and economically feasible.

**Members:**

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- Speaker of the House of Representatives
- Director of Transportation
- Director of Finance
- Chair of the House Government Appropriations Committee
- Chair of the Senate Finance and Taxation General Fund Committee
- Two At-Large Members

**About the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:**

This critically important, high-priority transportation project will involve constructing a new six-lane bridge across the Mobile River to increase Interstate 10's capacity and replace the existing four-lane Bayway with an eight-lane facility at an elevation above the 100 year storm surge event to reduce traffic headaches for thousands of commuters each day by saving motorists time.

The Wallace Tunnel currently averages 75,000 vehicles per day, reaching up to 100,000 vehicles during the peak tourism season. With almost double the daily traffic originally anticipated for the crossing, heavy congestions and longer travel times impact motorists, businesses, and the quality of life in the region. ALDOT expects this project to:

- **Reduce travel time between Mobile and Spanish Fort/Daphne.**
- **Increase reliability in travel times and accessibility to jobs, educational facilities, medical services, and recreational activities.**
- **Facilitate access to/from major industries and freight destinations in Mobile and Baldwin Counties and provide hazardous material vehicles a direct route away from the downtown district.**
- **Take all efforts to preserve and protect the Mobile Bay so that generations to come can enjoy the view and natural beauty from the bridge.**

**Hyperlinks within the advisory:**

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project: <http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe, efficient, environmentally and economically sound transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

**US 45 Feasibility Study**

This week, Volkert was given the Notice To Proceed on the *US 45 Feasibility Study*. The study will have its own web site and will begin shortly as the kick off meeting has yet to be set. Public participation is important for this project, so we expect our stakeholders to be heavily involved. We will keep you posted with the progress of the Study.

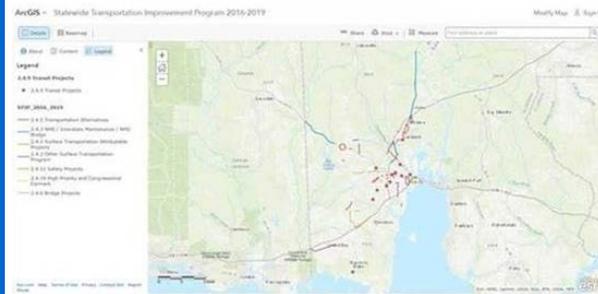
**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) NOW ONLINE**

The TIP represents a four year program (2016-2019) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area [Destination 2040](#). The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable

program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

ArcGIS Online is now being utilized by MPO staff to map all federally funded surface transportation projects within our area. Check it out.

2016-2019 E-TIP [HERE](#)



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### Comprehensive, Cooperative, and Continuing Agreement Concerning Mobile's Transportation Planning Process

The Mobile MPO 3-C Agreement has been finalized and executed. [HERE](#)

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### Mobile MPO 101

Here are a couple of great videos that were produced by our counterpart in Birmingham (Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham). The videos are a summary of the MPO planning process and are below:



Funding a Project with an MPO: <https://vimeo.com/210829210>



Inside an MPO: <https://vimeo.com/210825997>

[HERE](#) are the slides and presentations of the Mobile MPO 101 training.

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### Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

Project : 100055881 ( RW )  
Federal aid number : STPMB 7550 (602)  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : ADDITIONAL LANES ON CR-656 (ZEIGLER BLVD) FROM CR-70 (TANNER WILLIAMS RD) TO CR-31 (SCHILLINGER RD)  
Old Target start date : June 01, 2018  
New Target start date : August 01, 2018

Project : 100052448 ( RW )  
Federal aid number : STPMB 7612 (600)  
County : MOBILE  
Project Description : MCDONALD ROAD (CR-39) ADDITIONAL LANES FROM NORTH OF I-10 TO OLD PASCAGOULA ROAD.  
Old Engineers Estimate : \$1,155,014.00  
New Engineers Estimate : \$1,170,000.00

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## Projects Within Region Let February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

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### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

· For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on Sowell Road from south of the junction of Rankin Street to the intersection of Gordon Lane in Brewton. Length 1.135 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$917,893 to \$1,121,869 .

### **MOBILE COUNTY**

· For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Cable Guiderail Installation, and Traffic Stripe on I-10 from west of the CR-39 (McDonald Road) Interchange to the CR-59 (Carol Plantation Road) Underpass. Length 4.569 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$7,096,527 to \$8,673,534

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

· For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-59 from the junction of Windbigler Drive north of Foley to the junction of CR-54 in Robertsdale. Length 9.062 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$3,061,371 to \$3,741,676 .

### [What's Under Construction?](#)

#### [Project Status](#)

## Legislative Updates

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### [At Long Last, Administration Releases \\$200 Billion Infrastructure Package](#)

On Monday, the White House released its long-anticipated “[infrastructure package](#).” The *Legislative Outline for Rebuilding Infrastructure in America* would provide funding for an array of infrastructure projects – transportation, water, wastewater, Superfund, brownfields, and more. Though many of the headlines indicate that the package is worth \$1.5 trillion, the administration actually calls for a far more modest \$200 billion investment; state, local, and private sources would be expected to contribute the remaining \$1.3 trillion. The outline also contains detailed streamlining provisions to reduce the amount of time it takes projects to go through the federal approval process and creating a process where just one federal agency would take the lead on a project’s review. Response to the release was mostly underwhelming.

The outline proposes a total federal funding level of \$200 billion. By requiring significant local and state shares and encouraging private investment through expansion of existing financing mechanisms, the administration projects the resulting total infrastructure investment would be \$1.5 trillion. Despite the call from a wide variety of organizations, associations, and others, the bill does not specifically contain any funding to help preserve the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund, which will run short of funding starting sometime in 2020. Nor does the proposal contain a specific offset for the administration’s proposed funding.

The proposed funding is distributed through several new programs:

- \$100 billion for the Infrastructure Incentives Program, with funding distributed by USDOT, EPA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Local and state share of funding would be at least 80%, with additional credit given to projects with a higher non-federal share and from state or local funding sources that were raised most recently.
- \$50 billion for the Rural Infrastructure Project, \$40 billion of which would be distributed as block grants by formula to states based on total mileage of rural roads and rural population. The remaining \$10 billion would fund “rural performance grants” for states that have prepared comprehensive reports of rural infrastructure.
- \$20 billion for Transformative Projects Fund to support innovative projects that would otherwise have a hard time attracting private capital. Would support three tracks of projects: demonstration projects (30% federal share), planning (50% federal share), and capital construction (80% federal share).
- \$20 billion for Infrastructure Financing Programs, including \$14B for existing financing programs (TIFIA, WIFIA, RRIF) and \$6B for expansion of PABs.
- \$10 billion for Federal Capital Financing Fund, a funding mechanism to address current issues with real property acquisition by federal agencies.
- Establishes the Interior Maintenance Fund, up to \$18 billion to pay for capital and maintenance needs of public lands infrastructure. Funding is not included in \$200 billion total because it is drawn from additional revenues from mineral and energy development on federal lands and waters.

Other interesting policy changes proposed include:

- Removing restrictions on tolling existing Interstates.
- Raising the cost threshold for designation of “major project” from \$500 million to \$1 billion.
- Allowing utility relocation in advance of NEPA review completion.
- Requires use of “value capture” for transit projects under New Starts.
- Applying FAST Act streamlining provisions to rail projects.
- Additional provisions regarding water infrastructure, VA facilities, brownfields rehabilitation, and Superfund cleanup.
- An extensive array of streamlining provisions intended to achieve the administration’s goal of reducing the length of time it takes for federal agencies to review and approve infrastructure projects, with a goal of two years.

The full text can be found [HERE](#).

What does it mean for Alabama? [HERE](#)

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## Trump Open to Gas Tax increase

President Trump met with lawmakers Wednesday morning to discuss the infrastructure principles released earlier this week. In the meeting, Trump reportedly signaled that he would support a 25-cent gas tax hike, bringing it up several times during the meeting. This is not the first time he suggested his support of a federal gas tax increase, which could signal a real chance to help fund infrastructure and replenish the Highway Trust Fund. Based on conversations with the president, House Transportation and Infrastructure Leaders Bill Shuster (R-PA) and Peter DeFazio (D-OR) appear ready to work together to craft a proposal that supports a gas tax increase. Democratic and Republican leaders in the Senate have both opposed the idea.

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## Senate Confirms Three Transportation Nominees

The Senate confirmed three USDOT nominees on Tuesday, including Ronald Batory to lead the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Batory was formerly the president and COO of Conrail and worked for the Belt Railway of Chicago and the Southern Pacific Transportation Company. Also confirmed by voice vote were: Raymond Martinez to head the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and Adam J. Sullivan as assistant secretary of Transportation. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and other New York and New Jersey Democrats have held up these nominations since last summer to gain the president's commitment to fund the Gateway program, a rail improvement project in New York and New Jersey. After several months – and increasing pressure – Schuster relented and allowed the confirmations to move forward. He will continue his work to advance the project through Congress.

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## Funding Opportunities

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### Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) has worked with the [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) to clarify the ability of grantees to use Older Americans Act Title IIIB Supportive Services Funds to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. These FTA programs include Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307), Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310), and Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311). This information has been publicized [HERE](#).

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### FHWA Offers New Funding for Innovative Demonstration Projects

New funding is available from the Federal Highway Administration's Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program to encourage the transportation community to adopt proven innovations. [Funding](#) or the AID Demonstration program, launched in 2014 as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, was continued by the 2015 [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act](#). Since AID Demonstration was introduced, FHWA has provided more than \$43 million for 61 awards.

Under the program, funding of up to \$1 million may be awarded for projects that use proven innovations in any project phase, including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment and construction. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through Grants.gov, the federal government's website for information on funding opportunities. For more information on the AID Demonstration program, contact [Ewa Flom](#) of the FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation.

The FHWA continues the Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration authorized within the Technology and Innovation Deployment Program (TIDP) under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The AID Demonstration provides incentive funding for any project activities eligible for assistance under title 23, U.S.C. in any phase of a highway transportation project between project planning and project delivery including planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment, and construction that address the TIDP goals. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published on September 1, 2016 (<https://federalregister.gov/a/2016-21063>) requests grant applications and provides selection criteria, application requirements, and technical assistance with Grants.gov during the grant solicitation period.

Link to Additional Information: [FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation Grants page](#)

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### Industrial Access Road and Bridge

Industrial access funds are intended to provide adequate public access to new or expanding distribution, manufacturing and industrial firms. The industry must be committed to new investment and the creation of new jobs. The new access must be on public right of way for public use (state, city or county) and the project sponsor (city or county) must maintain the completed facility unless the facility consists of turn lanes, crossovers, etc., that are located on state highways. Industrial access funds are limited to construction, construction engineering and inspection costs. The project sponsor is responsible for all preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation costs.

Prior to the date the qualifying (new or expanding) project is "placed in service," the sponsoring entity or its local development agency must notify the Alabama Department of Commerce of its intent to claim the incentives under Section 41-9-202.1, Code of Alabama 1975. Effective October 9, 2008, the Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation application submittal should include the notification acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of Commerce. For more info, see [HERE](#).

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To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available click [HERE](#) or type [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) in your browser.

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## Just For Fun

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**LET'S PUT THIS IN HIS TANK**



Mardi Gras is over, and for a lot Christians it is a time of religious observance that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks later before Easter Sunday, known as Lent. A lot of people give up chocolate, or alcohol, or just try to be a nicer person. I don't know anyone that tries to be "mean" prior to Lent, but plenty of people drink too much alcohol during Mardi Gras as it is somewhat about the consuming a lot of something prior to giving it up temporarily.

BUT, isn't it interesting that *this week*, in 1933, when everyone is trying to give up alcohol for Lent, the US Senate and the House passed the Blare Act which repealed the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment known as "Prohibition". The repeal was formally adopted as the 21st Amendment to the Constitution on December 5, 1933. Prohibition lasted from 1920-1933, yet to this day the State of Virginia alone loses \$20 million a year in tax revenue to illegally smuggled whiskey, or moonshine. Prohibition is said to have cost the federal government a total of \$11 billion in lost tax revenue, while costing over \$300 million to enforce, and that was 75 years ago!

Completely related, Henry Ford's Model T could run on a variety of fuels [HERE](#). It was the first Flex Fuel vehicle in **1911** and [HERE](#) is how it worked. IN FACT, in 1919, Ford told The Christian Science Monitor (according to this New York Times account): "The fuel of the future is going to come from fruit like that sumach [a flowering plant] out by the road, or from apples, weeds, sawdust — almost anything."

Then, Prohibition happened. Prohibition killed the legal production of ethanol (alcohol) for 13 years, almost a hundred years ago. So WHY have we not technologically recovered? Henry Ford invented a car that could run on straight ethanol (a renewable, low emissions resource) over a hundred years ago. Did you know Brazil has replaced almost 42 percent of its gasoline needs with sugarcane ethanol – **making gasoline the alternative fuel** in the country? Google *Brazil's Biofuel Industry* and be amazed.

So **Just For Fun**, let's thank Congress for passing the Blare Act during Lent in 1933, but let's wonder why we are still so dependent on gasoline, all while trying to be a nicer person...

## In the News

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### Floating dock considered for Mobile's Cooper Riverside Park

Updated Feb 14; Posted Feb 14

By Lawrence Specker [lspecker@al.com](mailto:lspecker@al.com)

A floating dock could be in store for Mobile's Cooper Riverside Park, a new feature that potentially would serve as a launching point for eco-tours of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta.

The notion, in the form of a \$130,601 contract, popped up Wednesday on the Mobile City Council agenda. In keeping with normal procedure the proposal was held over for a week, but it did prompt some discussion.

Paul Wesch, director of finance for Mayor Sandy Stimpson, said the dock would serve two purposes. The first would be to facilitate tourism. Pontoon boat tours such as those that now launch from sites on the Causeway could launch from downtown. The park is at the foot of Government Street, between the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center and the cruise terminal.

"The second purpose and probably the more critical," Wesch said, is that the dock would be a small but concrete measure showing that the city is working to live up to obligations to the federal Department of Transportation. DOT grants helped fund the construction of the GulfQuest Maritime Museum and Michael C. Dow Landing, and the city has an obligation to show that the site is being used as a transportation hub.

GulfQuest planners had envisioned the facility serving as a ferry terminal, providing service to the Eastern Shore or other destinations. Those plans haven't yet materialized, and the museum itself has been semi-dormant since failing to meet traffic projections. But the commitment to DOT remains.

Wesch acknowledged that the dock is a small step, but it would "demonstrate that we're trying to figure that out."

Wesch said initial plans are to open the dock only to commercial use. Due to liability concerns the general public won't be able to fish off it, launch kayaks from it or tie boats up to it. In the long run, it may be accessible to private vessels, he said.

As for commercial users, Wesch said none have been identified but the city believes there is interest. Details of the financial arrangement between a tour company and the city would have to be worked out later, he said.

David Clark, head of Visit Mobile, expressed support for the idea. Councilman John Williams mused that Mobile might be the only city its size with no publicly accessible dock on its waterfront. Councilman Fred Richardson said he wanted the dock to "be for tourism" rather than for the use of one company.

Wesch said that the contract amount represented the total cost of the completed project, and said that if the contract is approved, the dock could be in place by early summer.

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### Lawmakers pass bill on statewide rules for Uber, Lyft

Updated Feb 13; Posted Feb 13

By Mike Cason [mcason@al.com](mailto:mcason@al.com)

The Legislature has passed a bill to set up statewide regulations for ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft.

The Senate passed the bill today by a vote of 27-0, sending it to Gov. Kay Ivey, who can sign it into law. Ivey has said she supports the legislation.

Ride-sharing companies have operated in some Alabama cities under city regulations. Advocates for statewide regulations said uniform rules were needed to help the services expand statewide. Besides making transportation more accessible, they said it would create job opportunities for drivers.

Uber and Lyft both advocated for the bill, which requires the Public Service Commission to issue permits and regulate the companies, which are defined as transportation network companies, or TNCs.

Under the bill, the companies will collect a 1 percent fee on each fare that will go to the PSC, which could retain up to half the revenue to cover the cost of regulations. The other half would go the cities and counties, allocated according to where rides originate.

City regulations now in effect would be phased out. Cities and counties would not be allowed to impose a business license requirement or tax on the companies.

TNCs would conduct or have a third party conduct criminal background and driving history checks on drivers.

By Mike Cason [mcason@al.com](mailto:mcason@al.com)

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## For decades Alabama has not funded public transportation, bill aims to end that

By John Sharp [jsharp@al.com](mailto:jsharp@al.com)

For more than two decades, Kimble Forrister has looked for ways to steer any amount of state funding toward public transportation.

It's been a futile attempt, and Alabama has long remained in dubious company as one of only five states that does not provide any state money for public transportation.

But thanks to a tip Forrister said he got from "an insider" with the Alabama Department of Transportation, a new strategy emerged. And on Tuesday, Forrister and a group of Alabama Arise advocates stood next to two lawmakers during a statehouse news conference to push for the creation of the Alabama Public Transportation Trust Fund.

"We know that both rural and urban areas need public transportation funding," said Forrister, state coordinator with Alabama Arise, the non-profit which advocates for low-income families. "Unfortunately, this is an area where we have not gone forward, we've gone backward. Public transportation is the future."

The trust fund, if created through legislative action, would be established to accept federal transportation grants and other appropriations to expand public transit options statewide.

The fund, according to the proposed legislation, would be administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). A 13-member advisory committee would then be set up to oversee where future funds will go.

The Alabama Senate already unanimously supported the measure, voting unanimously on Jan. 25. The measure now goes before the Alabama House, where Forrister and others are hopeful it will be voted on soon.

Tony Harris, spokesman with the ALDOT, said the agency doesn't oppose the legislation. The agency has opposed past efforts to divert gasoline tax resources for mass transit needs.

"The issue is getting it on the House calendar, and I anticipate we'll do that," said state Rep. Jack Williams, R-Vestavia Hills, the House sponsor.

Said state Sen. Rodger Smitherman, D-Birmingham: "When I dig myself in, I'm in it for the long haul. For this one, I'm in it for the bitter end."

But even if the trust fund legislation is approved, and signed by Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey, there is no guarantee any state money will be available for its initial funding.

Smitherman said he is hopeful that some funding could be available this year. If not, he said he plans on making it a priority in future legislative sessions.

State money funneled into the fund would be locked in for public transportation, and could not be diverted into the state's Highway Fund for road or bridge projects. Continue [HERE](#)

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## **Gulf Shores will consider dropping speed limit from 45 to 35 mph. on East Beach Boulevard**

By Mullet Wrapper on February 13, 2018

By John Mullen

Gary Ellis, developer of Marsh Landing mobile food vendor court on Alabama 59, says he definitely wants to have a full-service bar at his new development. But first, he wants to get the court up and running for the 2018 summer season. He is asking the city to allow him to delay building of permanent bathrooms and an open-air bar so the court can open as soon as possible. But it means his alcohol sales will take a hit.

"It's our understanding to have a full-service bar you do have to have a permanent facility," Ellis said. "However, there is a license that will allow you to sell beer and wine only without a permanent facility in place. That's something we're currently exploring just for the first season."

Also, during Monday's meeting, the city council was asked to pass an ordinance to formally ask the Alabama Department of Transportation to consider lowering the speed on a stretch of East Beach Boulevard from 35 to 45 mph. City Planner Andy Bauer said since this was the first mobile vendor court approved by the city and Ellis was asking for significant changes Bauer wanted it to go before the planning commission and council again.

"Since this is the first one the council has ever approved we felt like any deviation from the approved plan should be reviewed again," Bauer said. "Planning Commission approved this at its January meeting."

But it didn't come without conditions.

"Staff recommends approval of the phasing plan on the condition within one year of the phase-in plan approval the applicant shall obtain a building permit and commence construction on a permanent facility," Bauer said.

Ellis said having a bar on the site is vital to the success of the project so he is motivated to get the permanent structure going.

"We have no intention of foregoing the building of a permanent facility whatsoever," Ellis said. "It's actually critical to the revenue stream of the overall project. It would significantly impact the project as a whole to leave that component out of it. So, there's full intention to build that facility we just don't have the time due to environmental permitting to get that done and get that facility constructed prior to the season."

The bathroom facility will be a temporary trailer but will be connected to city sewerage and have a grinder pump on site as well. Construction of a kayak launch on the southeast side of the development will also be delayed. Palms & Slower Speed Limit on Bch. Rd. Palm trees may be coming to the new median system in Gulf Shores and dropping the speed limit to 35 mph will help bring about this new look, according to Public Works Director Mark Acreman said

"What this also does for us besides create a safer environment for all the people in this area it also gives us a lot more flexibility on what we can do with the landscaping in that center median," Acreman said. "A drop in the speed limit to 35 mph creates an urbanized street which will allow for vertical landscaping in the median such as palm trees.

"This does open the door for something pretty unique, not only for this segment but also for the entire two miles we're going our beach improvement project on. This does create some incredible opportunities to completely change the experience down there from an aesthetic standpoint as well as a safety standpoint."

Currently, the speed limit on Beach Boulevard is 35 mph as far east as East Third Street. But from there to the state park it increases to 45 mph. Acreman said he has been working with the state to get the lower limit in place and needs the city council ordinance to present to officials in Montgomery.

"We asked ALDOT to evaluate this section of road to see if it even qualified for a speed reduction before I even brought this to you," Acreman said. "They did a speed study that does support the request. So, we've already made that initial step. Once Montgomery approves that ordinance we'll be able to lower that speed limit."

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## **Transportation Research**

### **Bicycle Safety Survey**

ALDOT is conducting a research project "Comprehensive Investigation of Bike Crash Causes, Patterns and Countermeasures in Alabama". Please help us share this link to participants (both drivers and bicyclists). This survey is being conducted by the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) on behalf of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The main objective of this survey is to identify the status of drivers' and bicyclists' understanding of cycling regulations and rules in Alabama. The survey results will help design the appropriate outreach programs to better educate both drivers and bicyclists.

[https://uah.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_exhrpcJAXEaiJWl](https://uah.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_exhrpcJAXEaiJWl)



Sign up today to attend the [2018 SDITE Annual Meeting](#) to be held in Mobile from April 8 - 11, 2018. Since our section is hosting, we need to have great representation from all our section members. The Early Bird Registration rate of \$350 ends soon.

### [FHWA Publishes Guidance on TPM Travel Time Metric Data Reporting to HPMS](#)

The third performance measure regulation in the National Performance Management Measures requires state DOTs to submit performance metric and related data to the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) by June 15, 2018 and annually thereafter. The national travel time-based performance measures include the: Interstate Travel Time Reliability Measure, Non-Interstate NHS Travel Time Reliability Measure, Freight Reliability Measure, and CMAQ Peak Hour Excessive Delay Measure. FHWA released a document with information and guidance on complying with these requirements

### [2018 USDOT Webinar Series: What's New in Intelligent Transportation Systems \(ITS\) Deployment](#)

February 20, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET  
March 6, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET  
March 27, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

USDOT ITS Joint Program Office will host a new three-part webinar series highlighting the latest trends and developments in ITS deployment. To measure the deployment of ITS technology nationally, the USDOT's ITS Deployment Tracking Project surveys transportation agencies in the largest U.S. cities on a regular basis. The ITS Knowledge Resources Portal summarizes the benefits, costs, deployment levels, and lessons learned for ITS deployment and operations from over 20 years of ITS evaluation studies, research syntheses, handbooks, journal articles, and conference papers tracking the effectiveness of deployed ITS. The webinar series will provide an overview of these resources to support informed decision making on ITS investments, highlight recent additions to the survey, and solicit feedback from participants on how best to redesign the portal to improve its usability and value.

### [BTS Releases Pocket Guide to Transportation Mobile App](#)

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) has released a new dynamic mobile app for the [Pocket Guide to Transportation 2018](#) – a quick reference guide to transportation statistics. This popular guide provides the latest transportation statistics at your fingertips in mobile app and printed formats. It covers data on major trends, moving people and goods, system use and performance, the economy, safety, infrastructure, and the environment. [Download](#) the app now to access all the features of the classic Pocket Guide plus enhanced navigation, sharable graphics to social media and email, and dynamic data updates to highlight the most recent up-to-date statistics. The app is available on the App Store and on Google Play (keyword: BTS Pocket Guide). To access the *Pocket Guide*, go to [BTS Pocket Guide to Transportation](#) or text USDOT BTSPG to 468311. This publication can also be obtained by [ordering online](#), by contacting BTS by phone at 202-366-DATA or by e-mail at [answers@dot.gov](mailto:answers@dot.gov)

For inquiries other than placing orders contact Dave Smullen: [david.smullen@dot.gov](mailto:david.smullen@dot.gov) or 202-366-5568.

### [Making a Model a Good Predictive Tool](#)

A basic part of travel demand model validation is running the model for a "base year" and comparing the outputs to observed data. In this [FHWA project](#), two model versions for each of two metropolitan areas were run twice each: 1) the more recent version for its base year and a backcast scenario (for the base year of the earlier model version), and 2) the earlier version for its base year and a forecast scenario (for the base year of the later model version). This research was intended to produce useful data on which model components are most stable over time and their sensitivities to the factors affecting travel demand that vary over time. The report includes lessons learned and recommendations for planning agencies.

### [New ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Compliance App](#)

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- Location is automatically collected in GIS



## Transportation Dictionary

The USDOT released a searchable online dictionary that includes over 9,000 transportation terms and acronyms. The terms were collected from a variety of public and private transportation publications and databases. This dictionary presents over 9,000 terms and acronyms related to transportation. The terms and acronyms were obtained from various transportation publications and databases which exist within the federal government, private organizations, Canada and Mexico.

### Search Tips

- Sources are listed in parenthesis after the definition.
- None of the searches are case sensitive. Searching for PEDESTRIAN will produce the same results as searching for pedestrian.
- The Dictionary searches for the word, phrase or acronym as it is entered and returns all records that match or contain that word, phrase or acronym. For example, searching for pedestrian will return records for pedestrian and pedestrian walkway.

Click [HERE](#) for the search engine.